

Greater Brighton Strategic Priorities

January 2019

Background & Context

At the Greater Brighton Economic Board meeting on 16 July 2018, the new chair of the Board, Cllr Garry Wall, outlined his views on a vision for the next five years and Board members were asked to provide their responses to this vision. These responses formed the basis of a discussion paper that was presented at the Board Meeting on 16 October 2018. The main recommendation in the discussion paper was that a facilitated session be held in which Board Members could talk through the points raised in that paper in more detail, and work towards developing a Five Year Strategic Plan. This meeting took place on 11 December 2018, and this paper represents a draft set of priorities and recommendations on changes to governance based on the agreed conclusions from that meeting.

Objectives

Three main themes have been considered;

1. ASPIRATIONAL & STRATEGIC

Purpose and vision of the Board – what does the Board want to achieve?

2. OPERATIONAL & GOVERNANCE

How does the Board need to be organised to achieve the agreed vision and priorities?

3. RESOURCING & DELIVERY

What resources need be in place or available to deliver the agreed vision and priorities?

This paper is in two parts. The first focuses on the emerging vision and strategic priorities for the Board whilst the second half focuses on the more operational aspects of the Board.

Aspirational & Strategic

After four years of operation the Board must step-up its level of ambition and aspiration. To continue seeing success in the future, the Board needs a clear direction of travel accompanied by the strongest possible political voice.

Vision Statement

A high-level vision statement for Greater Brighton City Region would be to enable;

A growing, modern economy that is international, creative, connected, talented and resilient

International

- An international brand, identity and recognition
- A clear and compelling inward investment proposition
- Maximising the potential of our international gateways to exploit opportunities

- Utilising the connections of our universities to gain access to international skills and expertise

Creative

- Acknowledged innovation in specific sectors
- Maximising the opportunities through knowledge sharing and commercialisation
- Investing in hard and soft infrastructure of our creative and cultural economies
- Capitalising on the benefits of innovation and entrepreneurial spirit

Connected

- An efficient travel network with effective regional, national and international connections
- Ubiquitous fibre-to-the-premises digital infrastructure
- The most 5G-enabled City Region in the UK

Talented

- Attracting the world's most talented individuals to live, learn, work and invest in the City Region
- A modern and integrated approach to skills provision that reflects requirements for the region in order to retain skills
- Effective upskilling and reskilling in workforce development

Resilient

- Economic resilience – enabling an economy that is dynamic and learns to adapt to economic shocks and changes in Government policy
- Environmental resilience – of all infrastructure and in food production, and exploring the benefits of the circular economy
- Social resilience – of Greater Brighton communities and the wellbeing of residents

The vision may be an aspiration that takes 10 or even 20 years to fully realise. For the purpose of this document there will be a number of priorities to focus on over the next five years.

Key Objectives & Priorities

The five themes described above are implicit within the vision statement and effectively become our key areas of focus over the next five years. Once agreed a number of tangible and deliverable projects will be developed that will have clear outcomes to support delivery of the priorities.

For each of the areas of focus, a small number of key priorities have been identified. These priorities are aligned with both the government's Industrial Strategy and Gatwick 360°, Coast-to-Capital's Strategic Economic Plan. The priorities are as follows;

International

1. Build an international profile with strong and relevant supporting messaging.

An international profile will not only increase our chances of securing foreign direct investment, but a growing international reputation will also enhance the City Region's standing at a national, regional and local level.

Greater Brighton does have an economic and a social advantage above other City regions and a good brand on which to build upon, but to establish an international profile will require continuous, proactive marketing with clear and consistent messaging to the right places. Messaging should focus on the unique strengths of the City Region, particularly;

- Place e.g. UNESCO Biosphere and strong rural economy, connections through Gatwick Airport (UK's second largest) and the region's two ports, and internationally renowned universities
- Culture & heritage e.g. Brighton and Hove's offering including the regency heritage of the Pavilion, Dome, and Palace Pier alongside the region's theatres and entertainment venues and historic market towns
- Quality of life, natural capital e.g. 20 miles of coastline, South Downs National Park, and High Weald AONB
- Sector specialisms; Creative, Digital and ICT, innovation in health sciences and technology, Advanced engineering, Green growth.

In addition, the logo needs updating to reflect the renewed ambition and focus of the Board and the website needs an overhaul to make it fit for purpose.

2. Establishment of an inward investment proposition.

Current work on the Business Survey will inform this. To take this forward in a meaningful way, and in line with competitor City Regions, there is a need to co-ordinate inward investment at a City Region level and develop a strong city region brand and offer to deliver the recommendations outlined in the Greater Brighton Inward Investment & Trade Strategy.

Creative

3. Support innovative businesses to scale and grow

The City Region has a high number of start-ups and is recognised as a successful incubator for innovation. However, there is a need to develop a coherent and consistent business support offer to retain businesses, knowledge and intellectual property within the City Region. A key gap is providing ambitious businesses with the support and opportunity to grow and scale within the City Region.

Particularly around our sector strengths, which include;

- Creative, Digital and ICT
- Cultural Economy

- Healthy Futures (innovation in health sciences and technology)
- Advanced engineering
- Green growth

4. Sharing and commercialising knowledge

There are opportunities to be exploited from businesses and the universities working more closely together to commercialise knowledge (practical wisdom), the benefits of which will cascade across the City Region. The Board can support this by working with the universities so that they clearly articulate their offer to businesses.

Connected

5. Roll-out of fibre infrastructure

The clear priority here is to roll out fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) to all businesses and households in the next two years. Partners across the City Region are already involved in various schemes, and lessons need to be learned and shared so that the benefits can be maximised

6. To become the most 5G-enabled City Region

5G represents a game-changer in mobile communications. The University of Sussex's R&D expertise and industry partnership in 5G puts the City region at the forefront of this evolving technology. Gatwick Airport is also deploying 5G technology and by drawing these strands together with the SME-focused work at the Digital Catapult and 5G Testbed, Greater Brighton has the opportunity to become a trailblazer in the application of 5G technologies.

Talented

7. Attracting and retaining talent in the City Region

The City Region is home to a highly skilled talent pool. Attracting talented people to the City Region will benefit the City Region in terms of spending power and the creation of jobs aligned to the talent pool. To attract the best talent there needs to be a focus on the quality of life offer. Cultural strengths include Brighton and Hove's regency heritage, a range of festivals, theatres and entertainment venues across the region alongside historic market towns and natural assets such as the southern coastline, South Downs National park and the UNESCO Biosphere. All of these demonstrate that Greater Brighton is **THE** place to live, work, visit and invest.

To retain talent there is also a need to ensure individuals get jobs that are best matched to their skills and expertise.

8. Develop an integrated approach to talent

The City Region's skills offer must better match the needs of a modern economy. A priority must be to invest in people so that they can contribute to the economy and

improve social mobility. Assets such as the universities, colleges and schools need to be aligned and mobilised to achieve this. This includes investment in workforce training to improve staff retention, increase productivity and help business and residents to exploit the benefits of technological advancements such as robotics and the digitisation of the workplace.

Whilst skills are important there are other aspects relating to nurturing talent that should not be overlooked, including; behaviours, aspiration and adaptability. A holistic approach needs to be taken to attracting, nurturing and retaining a talented workforce.

Resilient

9. Build economic resilience

In an uncertain and fast-changing world, individuals, businesses and other institutions need to react decisively and positively to external forces, such as economic shocks or Government policy announcements. Resilience needs to be built in a proactive way, and technology will have an important role to play in embedding new solutions.

10. Build environmental and social resilience

For the Greater Brighton economy to continue to grow into the future, there is a need to build resilience and security into our blue, brown and green infrastructure. There is an opportunity to build upon the work the Infrastructure Panel is doing on energy and water to look at resilience and a circular economy in the whole. This will involve looking at other physical infrastructure e.g. digital, green infrastructure, food production and waste management.

There is also a need to build resilience in our communities and residents. Key areas of focus could be around mental health, social inclusion, food poverty and fuel poverty. There is a role that Greater Brighton can play in bringing together third-sector and other agencies in a “Social Innovation Lab” or similar central point.

Recommendations;

1. Adopt the new strategic vision and ten priorities for the Board
2. Continue enhanced communications activity including, proactive marketing with clear and consistent messaging, a website overhaul, and development of the brand
3. Develop a pipeline of projects which reflect the priorities
4. Continue to support existing work-plan projects to completion

Other Areas for Consideration

There are several other priority areas, which whilst not featuring in the priorities above need to be acknowledged;

Local Industrial Strategy

Working with Coast to Capital to deliver a Local Industrial Strategy will be an immediate focus, as this work is set to start in early 2019. The role for the Board is to clearly demonstrate how its priorities are aligned to Coast-to-Capital's Strategic Economic Plan (Gatwick 360°), and the Government's Industrial Strategy, and make the strongest possible case for investment into the City Region. A piece of work is currently underway to identify a number of projects that will help Coast to Capital deliver a successful Local Industrial Strategy at a Greater Brighton level.

Transport

Efficient and resilient transport infrastructure will be crucial to the future success of the City Region. The Board has a role to play, but a less direct one than outlined in the priorities above. The Board will need to focus its energy on lobbying for improvements to our main travel to work and travel to learn routes – the east-west A27 and A259, and north-south Brighton Mainline and A23/M23. This may be through sub-regional bodies such as the emerging Transport for the South East, direct interactions with the Department for Transport or with other agencies such as Highways England and Network Rail. The Board will need to be clear and consistent in its focus and messaging.

Housing

Greater Brighton is an area of high housing demand which is exacerbated by geographical and physical constraints around land availability. Demand is set to rise faster than supply into the future, so the challenge is only set to intensify. The Greater Brighton One Public Estate Programme will continue to review how we best use our assets and bring forward sites that can be used to develop new homes. But outside of One Public Estate there is limited direct intervention that can be co-ordinated at a Greater Brighton Level. Each local authority has or soon will have an adopted Local Plan that sets out housing delivery targets over the next 12-15 years. The role of the Board is to support the individual authorities deliver on the targets, and this again is best done by lobbying Homes England and other Government agencies for interventions that unlock stalled sites and accelerate housing delivery. The Board also has a key advocacy role to play in promoting the area to leverage-in private sector investment.

Recommendations;

1. Work with Coast-to-Capital to deliver a Local Industrial Strategy for the City Region
2. Agree that the Board adopt a strong lobbying role around transport and housing

Operational & Governance

Board Membership – Local Authorities

Five years in a rapidly evolving political and economic landscape is a long time, so the Board needs to take a fairly pragmatic approach to new membership and to extending the current geography. The advantages and disadvantages of expanding membership are set out below.

Advantages of growing membership	Disadvantages of growing membership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening Greater Brighton geography and extending its reach • Increasing voice and strength of argument to Government and other strategic bodies e.g. TfSE • Widening the Greater Brighton economy • Greater opportunities to realise the Board's vision and ambitions • Increased budget contributions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dilution of the functional economic area that was the foundation of the City Deal • Possible tensions with other stakeholders or neighbouring partners who share some of the City Region area or similar strategic aims • Increased numbers could reduce engagement and effectiveness of meetings • Increased numbers may require new governance structures and increase costs

With a range of advantages and disadvantages to be considered, a systematic and consistent approach to organisations that express an interest in joining the Board should be adopted. This can be fairly light-touch and act as a guide rather than a set of fixed criteria, but for proposed new members consideration would need to be given to the following five questions;

1. Does the organisation buy into the Board's agreed vision and priorities?
2. Do they share economic characteristics and represent our functional economic area?
3. Do they add capacity to help us deliver on our vision and priorities?
4. Will they add to the Board's reputation, in terms of legitimacy, standing and reach?
5. Are they going to actively participate and commit resource to supporting the Board and deliver the work programme?

Board Membership – Other Organisations

The limited business representation on the Board has been discussed at length and the consensus is for more effective engagement with the business sector. Opening the Board up to new business representation may seem like a logical step, but there are a number of potential issues;

1. Which businesses to invite, and how many? It could get unwieldy very quickly if we want representation from a number of sectors.
2. What is in it for the businesses? Business leaders will need to give up their time to attend Board meetings or other events and some sort of incentive may need to be offered.
3. What is the Board trying to be? Coast-to-Capital and Gatwick Diamond are already two business-led bodies, and business is represented on the Board through the three business partnerships.

Business engagement is clearly important, and the Business Survey being carried out in early 2019 will be the first time that Greater Brighton has directly reached out to the business community. The survey will be informative and is an opportunity to start a process of wider engagement with business. A recommendation is that at least once a year Greater Brighton should host a business engagement event. This would very much be a two-way information exchange aimed at building relationships between the Board and City Region businesses. Greater buy-in from business will be essential to deliver key priorities and will be especially important around positioning and messaging.

Recommendation

1. Set up regular business engagement events for the Board

Governance – Board Chair

The current situation, as directed by the Board's Heads of Terms, is that the Board Chair rotates on an annual basis between the local authority partners. However, it can be argued that this is not satisfactory as 1 year is not long enough for a Chair to build any momentum or forge strong relationships with external partners and stakeholders.

Recommendation

1. Amend the Board Heads of Terms to reflect an annual election of the Chair, but remove the requirement for a **new** chair to be appointed each year

The wording of the recommendation would mean that a serving Chair could put themselves forward once again to serve another year, and any number of years after that, but that every year there would be a formal process to elect the Chair.

Governance – Strategic Leadership

There is a need for Board Members to take greater ownership and involvement in the Board activities which will also strengthen the collective voice of the Board. The recommendation is that a cabinet-style system be adopted where Board members will lead on certain issues or key priorities, and this would involve both local authority and business partners. The Board Member would then act as a spokesperson for that area and take a strategic leadership role around the delivery of projects or work items around their area.

The Board does not have a dedicated officer operating at a strategic level. Work at the strategic level is led by Brighton & Hove City Council with some work picked up by senior officers from across the partnership. However, senior officers have limited capacity to drive forward the work plan, so this will be reviewed to see if there is an alternative approach.

Recommendation

1. Adopt a cabinet-style approach and appoint Board Members as spokespeople/leaders on priority areas

Governance – Board Meetings

The general consensus is that current format of quarterly two-hour Board meetings, is unsatisfactory, especially from the point of view of the non-local authority members. If the Board is going to realise its ambitions over the next five years there needs to be better engagement and participation from all members. The Board needs to function in a way that allows it to get most value from the knowledge and expertise present at the meetings.

There is a need to look at new approaches to Board meetings, and recommendations here are;

1. Reduce the number of annual Board Meetings from four to three
2. Throughout the year hold two further workshops, which could be thematic, to discuss issues in greater detail

Governance – Officer Programme Board

The Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board (GBOPB) comprises officers from across the partnership and the Greater Brighton Support Team. The GBOPB meets eight times per annum (twice between each Board Meeting). The exact role and responsibility of this Board is unclear, possibly because the purpose of the group and Board in general, has evolved from the early years following signing of the City Deal. The total time commitment involved from the officers in attending and preparing for the meetings is significant, and this time may be best employed on other activities associated with achieving the Board's priorities.

In contrast, specific working groups have been set up to support the delivery of the GB energy and water plans and the business survey with clear outputs and shared responsibilities, plus a high level of engagement from businesses, Government agencies and other key stakeholders.

Recommendations:

1. Review the Officer Group role and function
2. Set up specific working groups for all key priorities/projects

Resourcing & Delivery

Current member contributions to the Board budget are £180,000. The running costs of the Board (support team costs, communications, Legal Services, Democratic Services and other out-of-pocket costs) are around £146,000, which leaves £34,000 for the work programme.

However, for 2018/19 the work programme budget has been bolstered by a large underspend of £120,000 from 2017/18 (based on a cumulative underspend on salaries due to vacant posts), meaning that there is a large work programme. By the end of 2018/19 there is unlikely to be much underspend, so there will not be a large carry-forward to support work in 2019/20, current estimates suggest a working budget less standing costs of £40,000 in 2019/20.

If the Board wants to develop a number of projects to deliver its priorities and realise the ambition and there is going to be an additional cost aside from the resources of the Greater Brighton Support Team, there will be a need to increase funding, prioritise with the remaining budget, or a combination of the two options with agreed increased contribution for defined outputs.

Recommendations:

1. A budget report for 2019/20 will be presented at the next Board Meeting.
2. Each autumn a list of proposed projects and budget requirements are brought to the Board at a meeting for decision/prioritisation for the next financial year.

Recommendations

Some indicative costs have been provided as a basis for discussion. As a rough guide, the anticipated total cost for year 1 would be around £60k, of which £30k would be recurring in subsequent years, and a £30k one-off-cost associated with redeveloping the website and rebranding. This would mean increasing the Board's budget by around £25,000.

Aspirational and Strategic	Indicative costs
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt the new strategic vision and ten priorities for the Board 2. Continuing enhanced communications activity but including a website overhaul, and development of the brand 3. Develop a pipeline of projects which reflect the priorities 4. Continue to support existing work-plan projects to completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Chichester Business Support Programme • Greater Brighton Business Survey • Energy and Water Plans 5. Work with Coast-to-Capital to deliver a Local Industrial Strategy for the City Region 6. Agree that the Board adopt a strong lobbying role around transport and housing 	<p>None</p> <p>£24,950 p.a. + TBC</p> <p>Project dependent</p> <p>None</p> <p>£30,000 (potential carryover)</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>
Operational and Governance	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt the proposed criteria/questions used to evaluate potential new members 2. Set up regular business engagement events for the Board 3. Amend the Board Heads of Terms to reflect an annual election of the Chair, but remove the requirement for a new chair to be appointed each year 4. Adopt a cabinet-style approach and appoint Board Members as spokespeople/leaders on priority areas 5. Reduce the number of annual Board Meetings from four to three 6. Throughout the year hold two further workshops, which could be thematic, to discuss issues in greater detail 7. Review the Officer Programme Board role and function 8. Set up specific working groups for all key priorities/projects 	<p>None</p> <p>£0-£5,000 p.a.</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p> <p>£0-£1,500 p.a.</p> <p>None</p> <p>None</p>
Resourcing and Delivery	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A budget report for 2019/20 will be presented at the next Board Meeting. 2. Each autumn a list of proposed projects and budget requirements are brought to the Board at a meeting for decision/prioritisation for the next financial year* 	<p>None</p>

*For financial year 2019/20, this would have meant budget discussions taking place in late 2018 for agreement at the first Board meeting in 2019. This has not been possible within current timescales for work on this document so a budget report for 2019/20 will be presented at the next Board Meeting.